



PEABODY MUSEUM of SALEM

Register

JULY



AUGUST

1986

New Links Beyond Cape Horn
Johnston in Mauritius and Somalia

Intricately carved "Zanzibar door" in Somalia.

IN THE INDIAN OCEAN:
PAUL JOHNSTON TRAVELS
TO MAURITIUS AND SOMALIA





Maritime History Curator Paul Johnston was selected for the U.S. Information Agency's American Participant Program early this year. The program offers American experts from a variety of fields an opportunity to meet with groups and fellow professionals in other nations. In April Johnston travelled to the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius and to the African nation of Somalia as an expert on maritime history.

"The USIA was seeking a maritime historian to attend the bicentennial celebration of American contact with Mauritius in April," Johnston explains. "Since that contact was first established by Elias Hasket Derby's ship **Grand Turk** on her historic voyage to China, it was especially appropriate for the Peabody Museum of Salem to be represented."

Small cargo
and work boats
at the Old Port,
Mogadishu.

Merca, Somalia,
where New England
vessels traded.



Rigging
in Mauritius'
largest ship
model factory.



The role of Mauritius (then Ile de France) in the **Grand Turk's** story is not well known. The ship, under Captain Ebenezer West, touched at Port Louis, Mauritius, on April 22, 1786 en route to China. After selling part of the cargo there Captain West chartered two thirds of the cargo space to a French merchant in the island for the outward voyage to Canton. Shortly after the ship's return to Salem, as the first New England vessel in the China trade, she was sent out to Mauritius again under the command of Elias Hasket Derby, Jr. She was sold there for \$13,000. "The price was so high that Derby was able to buy two ships with the proceeds," says Johnston. "Elias, Jr. lived in the island until 1791, establishing a base for the Derby's voyages to India and China."

Another, later, connection to New England came in 1897, when Yankee skipper Joshua Slocum stopped at Mauritius aboard the sloop **Spray** on the first solo circumnavigation. Slocum entertained island dignitaries, lectured in an opera house set up on a ship in the harbor and took local ladies sailing aboard **Spray**. "There was method in his socializing," comments Johnston. "Slocum became so popular that **Spray** was refitted by the local port authorities at no cost to him."

In addition to taking part in the bicentennial celebrations, Johnston lectured at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and Sugar Research Institute, and visited the largest of

six ship model factories on the island. "These factories, which employ nearly 1000 people, are a major industry in Mauritius," he says. "The models are made for the tourist trade and are quite well done. The primary industry in modern Mauritius is sugar production, as it was in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was fascinating to connect the cargo manifests of the historic trade with the same enterprise now."

Johnston's next visit in the program was to Mogadishu, Somalia, a country with which there had been extensive Salem trade in the 19th century. Somalia was a major source of hides and skins for the North Shore shoe and leather industry until the advent of domestic cattle ranching in the 1870s. Exports to New England also included ivory, gold dust and frankincense and myrrh. The main New England exports to this region were *merikani*, (unbleached calico cotton from Lowell and Lawrence mills), and munitions.

"The visit to Somalia was a privilege for several reasons," says Johnston. "In the first place, they don't issue tourist visas, so there are few opportunities for Americans to see the country. Second, we have a number of Somali objects in the collection, a testimony to the extent of trade Salem once enjoyed with this nation. The third element was unexpected. I have never had a warmer and more enthusiastic reception in any other foreign place I've lectured." Johnston



The island of
Mauritius

Salvaging
a modern shipwreck
at Mogadishu.
The Somalian coast
is littered
with thousands
of shipwrecks.

explains that most of the Somali history is based on oral tradition. The nation's written history begins with European colonialism in the late 19th century. Johnston's lectures opened a window into an earlier era. "The questions they asked were fabulous. I've never encountered such deep interest," he says. "They are about to open a national museum, and I hope the visit could also lead to exchange possibilities."

The contacts between East Africa and Salem ran deep. A Salem ship, the **Sultan Ben-Said**, was named for the Sultan of Oman, then ruler of East Africa and Somalia as far north as Mogadishu. Another, the **Taria Topan**, was named for the Sultan's customs agent at Zanzibar, also responsible for the southern Somalian coast. The only known portrait of the Sultan is in the

JOHNSTON NAMED TO CAMM BOARD

Paul Johnston was named to the Board of Directors of the Council of American Maritime Museums during its April meeting in Beaufort, NC. He has been serving as Chairman of CAMM's Archaeology Committee.





Museum's collection, as is a gold bracelet given by Topan to the wife of Captain Nathaniel Batchelder, **Taria Topan's** master for many voyages.

"When he died in 1891, Taria Topan was said to be the richest individual in all of Africa. I'm sure that Salem merchants were major contributors to his wealth," Johnston remarks.

The Somalis trace their descent from Arab traders who began to visit that coast early in this millenium. "Their heritage of trade was similar to that of the Yankee traders," says Johnston, "and they seemed to have understood each other very well. Somalis are as proud as New Englanders of their reputation for driving hard bargains."

Both Mauritius and Somalia have numerous shipwrecks along their coasts, which include Salem vessels. Johnston sees considerable untapped resources for underwater archaeologists in those waters. On the coast of Somalia, at the Horn of Africa, for instance, rest the remains of the Salem ship **Guide**. She belonged to merchant-captain John Bertram and sank at Ras Hafun in 1860. The ship and cargo were a total loss.

"The trip was a terrific opportunity," Johnston concludes. "It was gratifying to see ports such as Port Louis in Mauritius, or Merca and Brava in Somalia, where Salem skippers did so much business. It broadened my perspective on the hardships they encountered and overcame." ■



VOLUNTEERS: THE FRIDAY LUNCHEON CLUB

The Friday luncheon club: every member has somewhat different interests.

It's late Friday morning. In ones and twos Museum volunteers are walking into the basement of the Dodge Wing and vanishing for an hour or more. To many in the Museum, this may seem to be a mystery, but it's one with a natural origin: the Friday Luncheon Club is in session.

The men, for all the members are men, are part of a tradition whose origins are near legendary. Of the early lunch club Honorary Trustee Russell W. Knight is the one survivor.



The Friday
luncheon club
at Knorr.



"The club was going strong when I became a volunteer here and joined it," he says. "That was 30 years ago. Then its members included Col. George L. Smith, Osgood Williams, Ernest Dodge, and others. We used to meet in the basement of Weld Hall."

There was a time when the club seemed doomed. "When all the others passed on, for a few months I kept up the tradition alone," says Knight. I had my volunteer work to do here, or I couldn't have done it, but I went on having lunch here. After a time others began to join me, and the club was renewed." By an unspoken consent Russell Knight, as the senior member, presides over the gatherings.

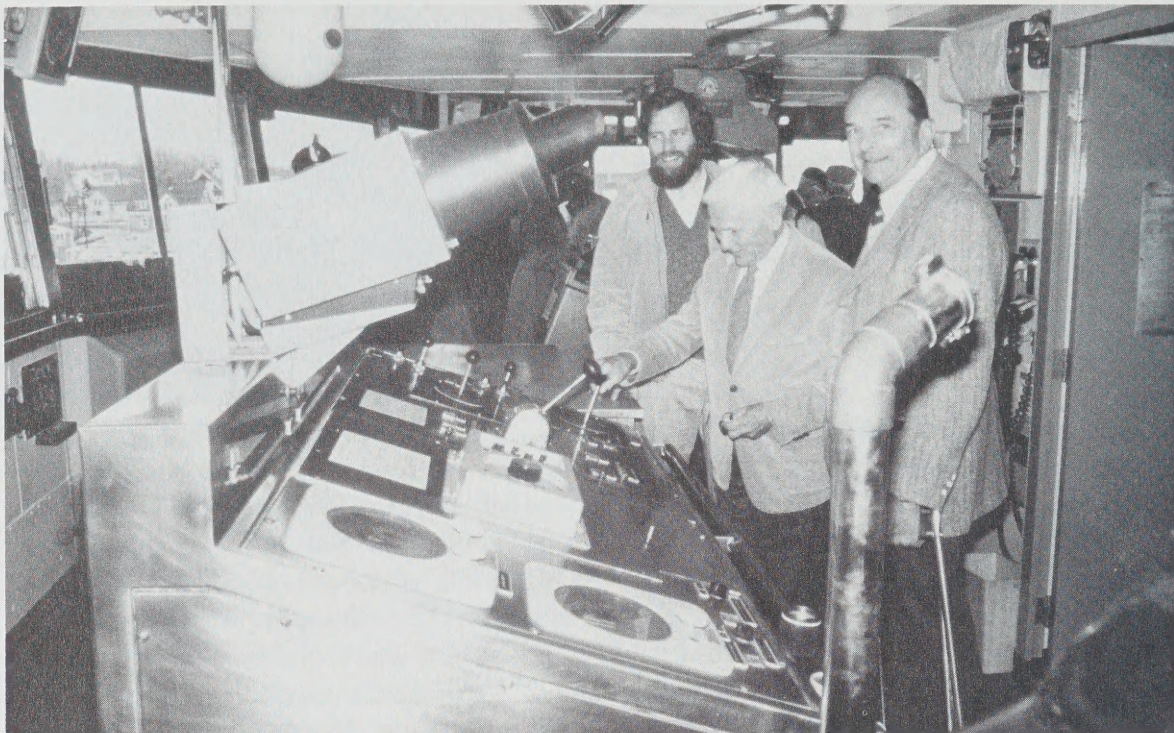
The name club is a little misleading. The lunches are marked by familiarity and a deliberate lack of structure. Nor is this a traditional smoker: the group has a definite purpose, the sharing of questions and information. Every member has somewhat different interests. They work in a number of different departments in the Museum and have brought different career experiences to their work. The variety of viewpoints makes for a lively spirit of inquiry. The issues or questions usually arise from volunteer duties, and come before the group as chance or turn of conversation dictate. Some are settled in one hearing, while others may endure as topics for several sessions. Occasionally an unanswered question leads to a field trip.

Early this spring, questions arose about the steering of the *R/V Knorr* and the submersible *Argo*, of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. Natural History Curator Rob Moir, who has contacts at WHOI, suggested that the group visit Woods Hole to learn the answers first-hand.

"We had our questions answered and learned a great deal more besides," said Fred Wales. "Nancy Green and Thomas Dettweiler of the Woods Hole staff went out of their way to show us the facilities. Over lunch we had a fascinating discussion of the S.E.A. program and the voyages of *R/V Westward* with her skipper, Paul DeOrsay."

The group looked at *Argo's* link with the surface and studied *Knorr's* propulsion and steering systems. The research vessel has rotating cycloidal propellers and has (to the club members' amazement) no wheel on the bridge. "The entire ship can be managed with a series of levers at several different stations," said Wales. "None of us had ever seen anything like it." In another building they were introduced to a gigantic deep thermal vent tube worm that lived at fantastic depths. "Until this was discovered no one believed that life could exist at such depths, miles below the surface of the sea," explains Rob Moir.

The trips, although memorable, happen infrequently. "We have to earn our time off," says Knight. "Our last trip was some months back, to the Cape Ann Historical



Association. In past years we've been to the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Kendall Whaling Museum, the Museum of Our Natural Heritage. We don't actually plan these trips: they happen spontaneously."

Sometimes a field trip brings up new questions. On a trip to the Mystery Hill site in New Hampshire, club members had the guidance of J.O. Brew, Peabody Professor Emeritus at Harvard, retired Director of the Harvard Peabody Museum and this Museum's Honorary Curator of American Indian Ethnology. Although Dr. Brew dispelled the site's "mysteries," the trip and the site can still spark lively discussion at the lunches.

For many, the club is a statement about volunteering. "We come to the museum to go on learning," says Dr. Fred Mayo. "The luncheon club is one more way to do that."

"If there's one outstanding virtue to this club, it is its spirit of versatile intellectual curiosity," comments Wales. "For me there is no more intriguing or appealing trait in human nature." ■

Field trips
are an occasional
part of the
club's activities.

"We earn
the time off,"
says Russell Knight.

JULY CALENDAR

tues **1**

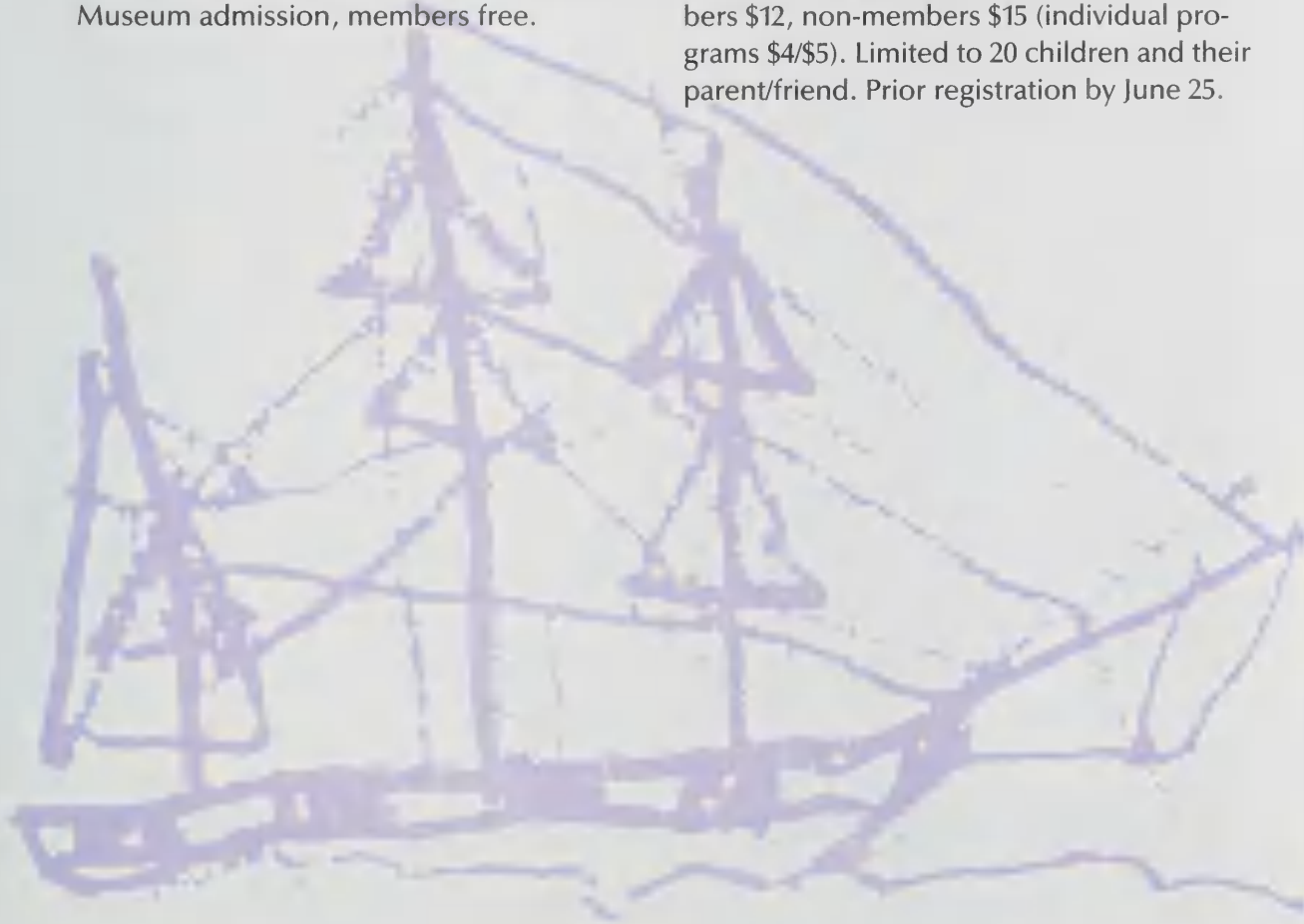
Gallery Talk

New England Voyagers. Mary Malloy, project coordinator and Museum Educator, will introduce a new exhibit of children's artwork by students from Reading Public Schools and their correspondents in Hawaii, Japan and China. The exhibit is a result of a five year collaboration between the Museum's Education Department and the Reading Public Schools. 11:00 a.m. No charge above Museum admission, members free.

wed **2, 9, 16, 23**

Course

Museum Discovery Days: Share the Museum with Your Preschooler. Using stories, games, gallery activities and crafts, Museum Educators Ellie Bailey and Ellen Soares will introduce children ages 4 and 5 (and their parents or adult friend) to the Museum and its collections. July 2 - Animals that Live in Shells; July 9 - Trees; July 16 - Dragons; July 23 - Creating with Clay. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Members \$12, non-members \$15 (individual programs \$4/\$5). Limited to 20 children and their parent/friend. Prior registration by June 25.



tues 15

Walk

Fish Flake Hill. Dan Hoisington, Director of the Beverly Historical Society, will lead a walk through Beverly's Fish Flake Hill Historic District. Explore the sites related to the birthplace of the American Navy, pass by many 18th and 19th century houses, including homes formerly owned by privateer Hugh Hill and poet George Woodbury. Co-sponsored by the Beverly Historical Society. 10:00-11:30 a.m. Directions to meeting place furnished upon registration. Members \$5, non-members \$7. Prior registration by July 8, limited to 25.

thu 31

Speaker of the Month

Chinese Influences on Western Architecture and Landscape Design. Dr. Patrick Conner is Keeper of Fine Art, The Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museums in Brighton, England. He is author of a recent book on the same topic. 11:00 a.m., Education Room. No charge above Museum admission, members free.



PEABODY MUSEUM of SALEM

To register for Museum Programs please call 745-1876 Mon-Fri, at least one week prior to the program.

AUGUST CALENDAR

mon-thurs **4, 5, 6, 7**

Course

Maritime Salem and the China Trade. Mary Malloy, Museum Educator, will lead this four day introductory course about Salem Maritime History. Sessions include: historic walking tours, curatorial lectures, visits to historic homes, tours of Museum gallery and storage areas and work with historic documents in the Museum Library. Books and lunch each day at a related location are included. Optional fifth day offered for teachers who wish to develop a maritime related curriculum. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Members \$200, non-members \$250. Teachers fifth day option \$25. Prior registration by July 21.

tues **12**

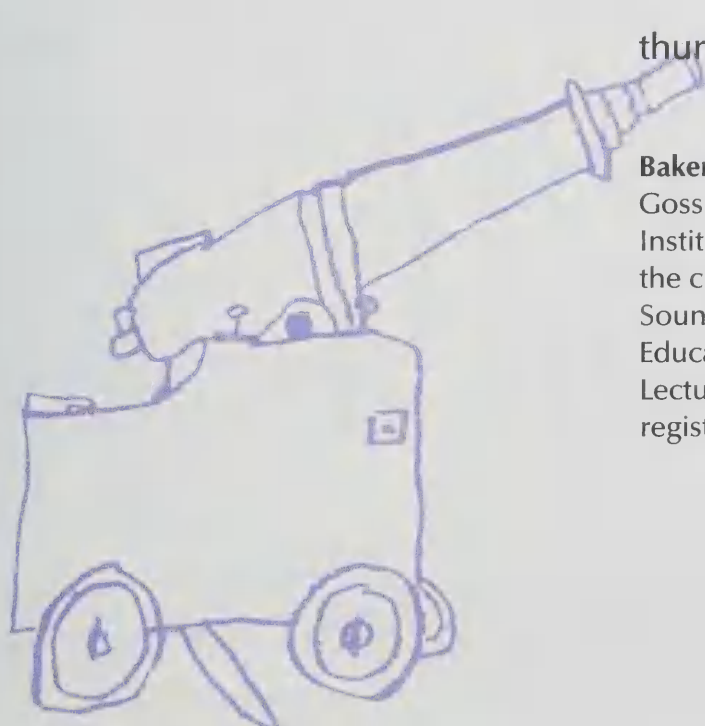
Gallery Talk

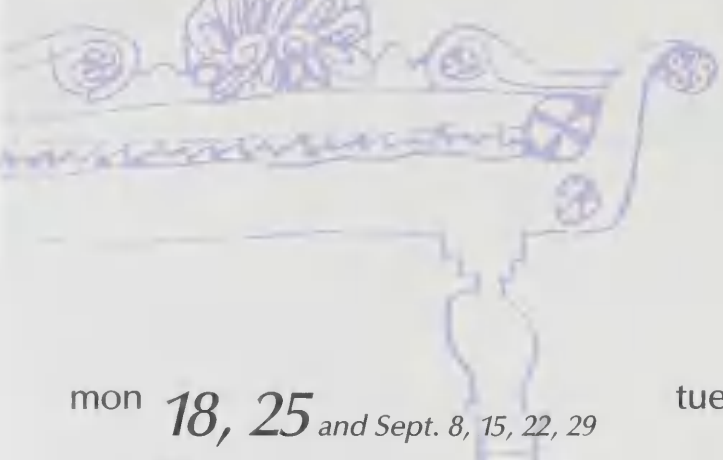
Chinese Export Art: Highlights from a Private Collection. Join Asian Export Art Curator William Sargent for a tour of an exhibit drawn from a private collection of 18th century Chinese export decorative arts. Learn about this special collection of silver, paintings and what may be the most significant gathering of Chinese export furniture in private hands. Special attention will be paid to Chinese furniture construction techniques which may be seen in these pieces. 11:00 a.m. No charge above Museum admission, members free.

thurs **14**

Members' Evening

Baker's Island through the Years. Join David Goss, Director of Education at the Essex Institute, for an illustrated lecture reviewing the changing uses of Baker's Island in Salem Sound from the 17th century to the present. Education Room. Reception 7:30 p.m., Lecture 8:00 p.m. Museum members. Prior registration by August 7, seating limited.





mon **18, 25** and Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29

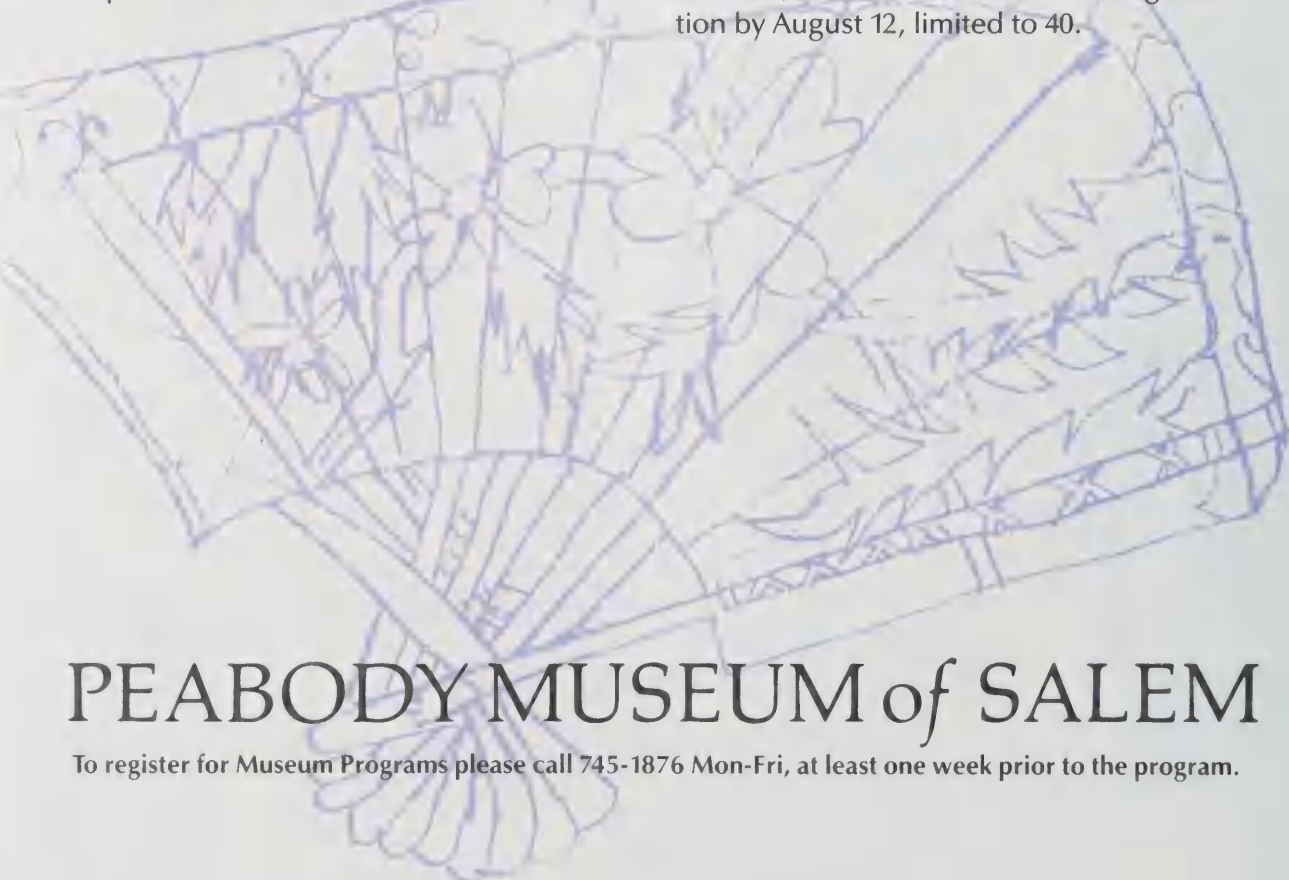
Course

China: Past and Present. Ellie Bailey, Museum Educator, will lead a study group covering a comparison of modern and traditional China through readings, discussions, films, Museum artifacts, curatorial lectures and gallery talks. Study group format includes class participation and several hours of reading each week. 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Education Room. Members \$20, non-members \$25. (Course fee does not include price of books.) Prior registration by August 8, limited to 12. Contact Museum Education Department for further information.

tues **19**

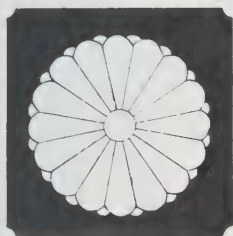
Day Trip

Herbs and Roses. Join Ellie Bailey of Museum Education Department and spend the morning at Green Tree Farm in Rowley, Mass. learning about the many herbs grown and used on this beautiful property. Tour the gardens and enjoy a special luncheon flavored with herbs and served in the barn. Next, visit the Nor'East Miniature Roses, a commercial nursery, and see display gardens in bloom. Learn about the growing of miniature roses while touring the greenhouses. 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Members \$20, non-members \$25. Prior registration by August 12, limited to 40.



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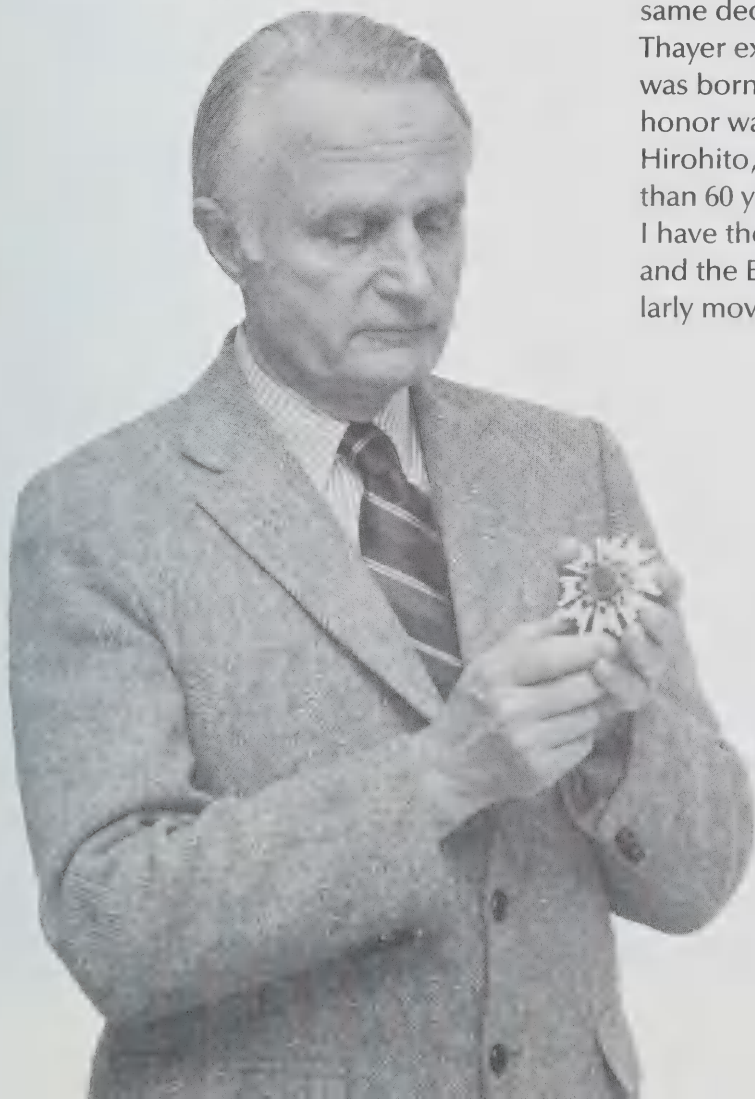


THAYER DECORATED BY THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN

John E. Thayer III, Research Fellow in Japanese Arts and Crafts, has received the fourth class of the Order of the Sacred Treasure. The honor was announced by Emperor Hirohito on his official birthday, April 29. This year is also the 60th of the Emperor's reign.

The award cites Thayer's achievements in promoting mutual understanding between the United States and Japan. For him there is an additional, personal significance linked to his work at the Museum as Research Fellow in Japanese Arts and Crafts.

"In 1922 Edward S. Morse received the same decoration from the Taisho Emperor," Thayer explains. "That was one year before I was born. Morse's proclamation for the honor was signed not by Taisho but by Hirohito, who was then regent. Now, more than 60 years later, he's signing mine. Since I have the deepest admiration for Morse and the Emperor the experience is particularly moving for me." ■



Thayer with
Order of
the Sacred Treasure
presented to
E. S. Morse
in 1922.



IVAN MBAGINTA'O

Ivan G. MbAginta'o, Director of the J. K. McCarthy Museum in Goroka, Papua New Guinea completed a year long training program at the Museum in June. The Developing Country Fellowship from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research supported the program, which covered more than a dozen aspects of museum administration and technology in a program tailored to MbAginta'o's requirements.

"Ivan has studied fundraising, techniques for managing volunteers and relations with donors and trustees," explains Peter Fetchko, Museum Director. "He has also explored equipment for collection maintenance, cataloguing, lighting, storage and display. While we've learned to make the best use of our newly automated acquisition and information retrieval systems, Ivan has shared in the process."

The J. K. McCarthy Museum, founded in 1966 as a branch of the National Museum at Port Moresby, is one of only two museums in all of Papua New Guinea. Situated in the densely populated Eastern Highlands, the McCarthy Museum possesses an important ethnographic and archaeological collection of Melanesian and New Guinea artifacts. The Peabody's strong collection in those areas made it an ideal place for MbAginta'o to become familiar with American museology. MbAginta'o was



Ivan MbAginta'o
with wife Aileen
and children
Mattias
(in backpack)
and Carleton.





appointed Curator of the two room McCarthy Museum in 1979. The museum, now with a staff of four, houses more than 2000 items and is visited by increasing numbers of tourists and scholars from other nations as well as local schoolchildren and citizens.

MbAginta'o is a protege of Dr. Carleton Gadjusek, Honorary Curator of the Peabody's Melanesian Collection and recipient of the Nobel Prize for Physiology in 1976. He was a member of Dr. Gadjusek's *kuru* research expedition and medical study in the Eastern Highlands, working as a field assistant and translator. Under Dr. Gadjusek's guardianship MbAginta'o came to the United States to attend school near Washington, D.C.

Through Dr. Gadjusek, MbAginta'o met Peter Fetchko and served an internship in the Peabody's Ethnology Department in 1976-1978. He has since written extensively about his tribe, the Anga Dunkwi, and has produced a number of films recording expeditions in Papua New Guinea, West New Guinea, Micronesia and the Solomons to study child development and the disease *kuru*.

In 1979, he decided to return to New Guinea and accepted the position at the McCarthy Museum. Shortly thereafter he married his wife, Aileen, whom he met through relatives at Port Moresby. They are the parents of Carleton, 6, and Mattias, 2.

MbAginta'o's family came to Salem with him for the term of the program.

The experience of their year on the North Shore has been a rich one, and MbAginta'o looks forward to applying the lessons of his stay at the McCarthy. "I would like to set up a darkroom," he says "in order to photograph our collection. I would also like to develop exchange programs with other museums, exchanging personnel as well as artifacts." Although he and his family will miss the many friends and colleagues whom they have met here, MbAginta'o admits that he looks forward to being home. "We want to re-establish our family ties, and settle our sons in the town and the school. The only thing I leave behind happily is the cold weather."

"The Peabody Museum of Salem has gained from the friendship that has developed, and has established a liaison with an important southwestern Pacific museum," says Peter Fetchko. "We are pleased that we have helped in the training of its director, so that he may perform still more effectively in his key role and promote a long lasting friendship between our museums and our two nations." ■



NEW MUSEUM MEMBERS March - April 1986

MASSACHUSETTS

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Lauenstein-Denjongpa
Family

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Mrs. Jessica F. Kennedy
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Marcoz Antiques
Waterline Publications, Inc.

Brookline

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Mr. Charles E. Arnold

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Traverso

Mrs. Eva Ritter-Walker

Lexington

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Mrs. Donald Wallis

Mrs. Mildred Zimmerman

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Dr. and Mrs. David
Wilmarth

Milton

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Mrs. Alexander Northrop

Needham

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Newburyport

Mr. and Mrs. John Neale

Pembroke

Mr. Burton Sherman

Peabody

Miss Marguerite S. Parker

Reading

Reading Public Library

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Miss Doris Szybiak

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Hourihan

Mr. and Mrs. B.P. Goldsmith

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Mr. John Patt

Mr. and Mrs. Salvatore D.
Pangallo

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Dr. & Mrs. Robert J.
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Wellesley Hills

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Westwood

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Winchester

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Atlanta

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Professor Jacques M.

Downs

Mr. David R. Scarborough

MICHIGAN

Grosse Pointe Farms

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Mr. Charles D. Webster

New York

Mottahedeh and Company,
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EXHIBITS INFORMATION

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MUSEUM HOURS

Monday to Saturday

10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Sundays and Holidays

1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

CONTINUING EXHIBITS

Yankee Traders and Indian Merchants 1785-1865. An exhibit commemorating the relations established through trade between the United States and India, celebrating the Festival of India.

The Tribal Style: Selections from the African Collection at the Peabody Museum of Salem. Sculpture, masks and personal and domestic objects reflecting the vitality of African artistry and craftsmanship.

Chinese Export Art: Highlights of a Private Collection. Furniture, silver, paintings and precious objects drawn from a personal assemblage.

New England Voyagers. Artwork by students from Reading, Mass. and their correspondents in Japan, China and Hawaii, the result of a five year collaboration between the Museum and the Reading Public Schools.

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